



# Press Release

**Congressman John Conyers, Jr.  
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**Ranking Member, U.S. House Judiciary Committee  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

[www.house.gov/judiciary\\_democrats/index.html](http://www.house.gov/judiciary_democrats/index.html)

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**88 MEMBERS OF CONGRESS CALL FOR IMMEDIATE ANSWERS  
ABOUT SECRET BUSH/BLAIR PRE-WAR DEAL**

Today, 88 Members of Congress, led by Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee and Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus, wrote to President Bush to demand answers about confirmed reports of a pre-war deal between Great Britain and the United States and unassailable corroboration that pre-war intelligence was intentionally manipulated. Over the weekend, the British press uncovered classified minutes of a summer of 2002 secret meeting between Prime Minister Tony Blair and his advisers about preparations to go to war with Iraq. The letter and minutes are attached.

The minutes of this meeting contain the following stunning revelations:

- British officials offered an assessment of the case for war as “thin.” The British Foreign Secretary at the time also stated that “Saddam was not threatening his neighbours, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea or Iran.”
- The Foreign Secretary indicated a plan was being hatched with Bush Administration officials to create justifications to go to war, where no legal basis currently existed. The United States and Great Britain “should work up a plan for an ultimatum to Saddam to allow back in the UN weapons inspectors. This would also help with the legal justification for the use of force.”
- British officials indicated that Bush administration officials had already decided to go to war in the summer of 2002 despite contemporaneous, and apparently false, statements by Bush Administration officials that the President had not yet made such statement. One official stated that “[m]ilitary action was now seen as inevitable” and the British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw indicated that “Bush had made up his mind to take military action, even if the timing was not yet decided.” Yet, in August of 2002, within a month of this meeting, the President claimed he was still willing to “look at all options” and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld flatly stated that

“[t]he president has made no such determination that we should go to war with Iraq.” (NYT, 8/22/02).

- A high ranking British official acknowledged the deliberate manipulation of intelligence, indicating that, while the President “wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD,” “the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy.”
- The same official warned that the Bush Administration had no plan for post-war Iraq, stating that “[t]here was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after military action.”

Congressman Conyers issued the following statement: “These allegations strike at the heart of our democracy and present the most troubling constitutional questions. Did the Administration lie to the American people about its intentions with respect to Iraq? Did the Administration engineer a confrontation with Saddam Hussein to justify the war? Did the Administration deliberately manipulate intelligence to deceive the American people about the strength of its case for war?”

“These allegations – that the Bush Administration had already decided to go to war with Iraq, during a time when it was publicly stating that it had not -- echo allegations by former Bush Administration officials, Paul O’Neill and Richard Clarke. When these officials brought these allegations forward they were slandered by Administration officials as lacking credibility. The source of these allegations – the British government itself – cannot be similarly assailed.”